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ART STUDY IN NEW YORK.



DURING recent seasons the advancing ratio of increase in the number of students in all different departments of art has been such, that probably few persons unconnected with this system of tutelage, can have any very correct idea of its magnitude. From present multiplied arrangements, numerical exactness must be quite out of the question in estimating the art-studying men and women in New York. Members of the considerable army of these are far divided in purpose and performance, the complication of estimate becoming more involved, as it happens frequently that the same person receives double or three-fold instruction in schools of widely different grade. It is only less difficult to indicate any well-defined classification in such study here as a whole. In a general view the course of this development appears somewhat chaotic, while art is widened "with the process of the suns" to a varied activity, measurable only with the manifold faculties in exercise under the artistic bent of the age.

While the inclination for facile accomplishment may be considered surprisingly great, this movement is not perhaps without fair balance on the more serious side. A fact pointing to such a conclusion is that of a larger proportion of students than heretofore being reported in the life classes of the Art Students' League. The painting class instructed by Wm. Chase contains about double the number enlisted in it at the same time last year, notwithstanding that this is a class of high standard, in the formation of which it is understood that ten are rejected to one accepted. In the new quarters of the school are increased facilities for study, meeting the wants of about three hundred students in attendance. From eight o'clock in the morning until ten at night are gathered here the earnest workers in successive groups, with all the classes duplicated. Five life classes—of which three are for ladies—are assembled daily, while very few schools have more than two. It is claimed that the advantages offered here to women studying art professionally, are greater than afforded by any other school in existence. In the middle of February of last year it was decided to hold a second day session of the ladies' life class, for the advantage of those working in their studios during the earlier hours, this class beginning at 4 P. M. and continuing until 6.30 P. M., under the instruction of Mr. C. Y. Turner. With the return of Mr. Walter Shirlan as instructor to the League, the new life class is committed this season to his charge, while Mr. Turner takes the ladies' class forming at midday, the evening class for ladies being instructed by Mr. William Sartain. Another recent feature of importance is that of the costume classes formed last year for an experimental course of three months. The sessions of the present season, which is lengthened to six months, are held three evenings a week, an additional day class being organized, which works from the same costumes and models. The fortunate condition of the school is shown farther in its improved arrangements of class-rooms and studios, with numerous valuable additions to its fine art collection, besides considerable gain in the way of decorative accessories. A fund is placed in Europe, subject to the order of appointed representatives of the League, who seek there desirable examples for the benefit of the school. Among last year's purchases were photographs of important works by Velasquez, Ribera and Van Dyck, a series of photographs of works by Michael Angelo, and a collection of reproductions of modern French paintings. In the extension of its work in different ways the League evidently more than fulfills its early promise of progressive method and breadth of serious aim. The very highly respected position it holds among art schools of the world has been attained by uniting with an unusually high standard the thoroughly modern character, attracting to it the younger artists of greatest talent.

The schools of the National Academy, with their necessary limitation to two hundred students, continue, with little marked variation, from the course of former years. Nevertheless, while outwardly preserving the forms established many years ago, the spirit of this honored institution has not remained completely unaffected by recent advancing tendencies, led by progressive artists of acknowledged high talent. An interchange of ideas is signified in the single fact that classes are conducted here and in the Art Students' League by some of the same instructors. As heretofore, Mr. L. E. Wilmarth has general charge of the antique and life schools, while specially instructing

the composition and sketch classes which have been added. Mr. J. Wells Champney has become more recently the instructor in art anatomy, while Mr. W. H. Lippincott and Mr. Frederick Dielman serve as professors respectively of painting and perspective. The modeling class is so fortunate as to be under the instruction of Mr. J. Q. A. Ward.

As ranked by high popularity the art schools of the Cooper Union take precedence as formerly among institutions of this class. The women's department consists of four hundred students, who are about two-fifths of the number of applicants. Hundreds of others—as is stated more than seven hundred during the year past—coming with the hope of entering the school, have gone away without registering their names, seeing how slight are the chances for admission. One of the various circumstances tending most effectually to widen appreciation of the school, is that of recent known successes of its graduates. Within the past two or three years more than the usual number of these are heard from as holding positions of honor and advantage, a few of the class of 1880 being reported as most favorably established. One is at the head of the Decorative Art Society of New Orleans, with a salary of \$1,800, an equal additional income being derived from private orders. Another receives \$1,200 as teacher of art in the State Normal School at Winona, Minn. Three are teaching normal courses in different schools in Michigan, at salaries ranging from \$800 to \$1,500. One superintends an art school recently established in Charleston, S. C.; one is engaged by a photographer in Concord, N. H., at \$1,200, and another with the same salary is at the head of a decorating establishment in Boston. A condition of new, and important interest in the school arises from an extension of its means. In addition to the final bequest of \$100,000 from the late Peter Cooper, are more recent gifts of \$50,000 each from Mr. Edward Cooper and Mrs. Abram Hewitt, forming an equivalent to the sum left by their father, whose work is taken up thus generously. The proceeds of the recent endowment of \$1,500 from the Women's Centennial Committee, are appropriated exclusively to aid indigent art students of the school. Among the chief instructors of classes here, continuing the same as last year, are R. Swain Gifford as teacher of oil painting, and Mr. John P. Davis in wood engraving. Mr. William Sartain and Mr. William H. Low are newly engaged with classes in the life and cast department. Another change is in the appointment of Miss Clara Wilson as teacher of normal drawing in place of Miss C. E. Powers, whose marriage and removal to Washington deprived the school of her services. The amateur class, which is the only one in the school not free, has greatly increased; numbering about two hundred students, its fees are sufficient for paying the teachers and contributing some overplus to the support of the free schools. The number of masculine students admitted to the evening art classes during a season are more than quadruple those in the women's department for the same time, with resulting benefit considerably more dispersive. In the pursuit of their varied occupations these students are very frequently compelled to relinquish the advantages of the school after only a partial course, on account of changing their locality. The entirely practical instruction which is received, has reference chiefly to industries employing the arts of design, while talent for higher art, which may be discovered here, is recommended to the attention of schools for professional artists. The most numerous filled classes are those in mechanical, architectural and ornamental free-hand drawing, with usually somewhat smaller numbers in perspective, cast and form drawing, and in modeling in clay. In this department is shown a recent valuable accession in the form of casts, coming as a gift from Mr. Edward Cooper, the pieces including a copy of Michael Angelo's Slave, with two other full-length casts, adding specially to the interest of the collection.

Another school, accomplishing most excellent results in improving the character of the trades, is that of the Mechanics' and Tradesmen's Society. Its accommodations in the basement of the library building of the association in Sixteenth Street are limited, providing for only about two hundred and fifty pupils, of whom all are employed in some of the trades. An architect, Mr. J. C. Babcock, is superintendent, while about sixty per cent. of the students are engaged in trades connected with building. Instruction is given with direct reference to occupations, with twenty-eight trades represented in the present season's attendance. The methods of the school are peculiarly conservative, and, what is of more importance, in a very high degree successful. One of the teachers, a chaser and engraver, as was his father before him, has taught his classes conscientiously here for twenty-five years, no school giving such an impression of

age, nor of doing more genuine service. A woman's class, under the direction of Miss Julia Stone, numbers about thirty students, some of whom attend the Cooper Union classes in the morning. Exclusively evening sessions are held in this school, as in the male department of that last mentioned. The difference here is in the exclusion of all but apprentices as students. In one case clerks and various applicants are eligible from their simple desire for art instruction, without any definite purpose of applying the knowledge; in the other the first recommendation consists in holding an apprenticeship, and the benefit possibly may be the more exact and complete from the limitation. The excellent advantages connected with each of these plans, as carried on, have been attested sufficiently through a quarter century experience.

As regards membership, the classes maintained by the General Society of the Mechanics' and Tradesmen, correspond to those of the New York Trade Schools, the difference between the older school and that in its third being of method. This school of manual instruction is conducted in accordance with the idea of Mr. Auchmuty alone, at whose individual expense it was founded. It now comprises about one hundred and fifty students increased from one hundred and ten assembled at the opening of the autumn; at the corresponding season last year the classes were formed with forty students. The buildings of the school show an extension in the form of a workshop erected during the past spring by members of the bricklaying class; this forms the fifth in a series of shops and office buildings, fronting on First Avenue and extended by the new structure to the corner of Sixty-eighth street. It is no longer the idea of the management that finished mechanics are to be made in the schools. From recognizing the final impracticability of such a course, the original plan has been modified to that of a certain amount of thorough instruction being given with the use of tools. Although the classes are only regularly in session in the evenings, the workshops are open during the day for those who desire to practice. A new class of importance, considering the need of improvement in this work, is one in plain and ornamental stone-cutting; another in turning, scroll sawing, and wood carving, is of equal interest. Quite full classes are those receiving instruction in fresco painting, plastering, and in laying face bricks, and in cutting brick for arches, while greater numbers are engaged with processes of bricklaying and plumbing, practically with necessary limitation. In all its departments the work of the school is of increasing success, proving the advantage of an undertaking so wholly novel here, and through early groping for an adaptable method showing itself conformed rather to an ideal than copying any existing model.

The twin of this school, issuing from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, provides technical instruction differently. One of its courses in the theory and practice of the arts taught is equally adapted to the professional student and the amateur. Although technical work continues the first aim, it has been determined to extend the curriculum to include an element more purely artistic while working up the rudimentary mechanical drawing and designing to a finer stage. A large class in carriage drafting and construction, numbering somewhere near fifty students, which is under the auspices of the Carriage Builders' National Association, is one of the most flourishing and interesting. It meets three evenings in the week for the study of carriage building, mechanically and artistically. Instruction in furniture designing is given by the manager, Mr. Ernest Gilles, a gentleman connected with the Marcotte decorating establishment. A class of about a dozen students in modeling in clay is to be afforded the instruction of prominent sculptors, while increased advantages are provided in the departments of life and antique drawing, carving, and decoration. Classes in perspective and in artistic anatomy are placed under favorable circumstances. In the women's department are two classes, one in industrial art receiving instruction in the use of tempera in artistic decoration, and the other in fine art, taught by Mr. Frost Johnson. A feature of special importance for the new year is a proposed course of art lectures for working men directly interested in art, the discussions being illustrated by stereopticon views. Another recent plan has been undertaken for an exhibition and salesroom, while a system of competitive examinations will be established with prizes, medals and diplomas. A collection of about five hundred fine carbon photographs from paintings, sculptures, and drawings by old masters, is among new acquisitions of the school; these reproductions are chiefly secured from the Vatican and from Florence, by Mr. J. Ward Stimson.